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1. *Chlorophyll *a** and *Chlorophyll *b** were determined by the method of Arar and Collins (1971).

THE
BATTLE OF SENLAC

AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY
JOHN M. ASHLEY, B.C.L.,
AUTHOR OF 'LISA,' 'THE BURIAL OF POLYNICES,' ETC.



London:
SAMUEL TINSLEY & CO.,
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1880.

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280. o. 521.

TO

LEILA, LADY WALSINGHAM,

THE FOLLOWING COLLECTION OF POEMS IS, BY HER LADY-
SHIP'S PERMISSION, GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

As THY graced presence, like a ray of light,
Sheds gentle goodness all its path along,
So would I that thy soul, both pure and bright,
Might gain fresh strength from this, my book of song.
THY gifted mind thy skilful brush displays,
True Artist THOU ! accept a Poet's lays.



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THE BATTLE OF SENLAC.

A Day of English History.



In 'The Battle of Senlac' the common and traditional accounts have been closely followed. The description of the fight has been drawn from the sources which are known by and are accessible to all: such as Green's 'Short History of the English People,' 'The Student's Hume,' a charming little monograph by Professor Frederick York Powell, entitled 'Early England,' and lastly and chiefly from the late Lord Lytton's marvellously beautiful story of 'Harold,' especially from his lordship's notes to his text. The gleanings from the Early Norman Chronicles given by Lord Lytton have as far as possible been incorporated into the ballad, the object of which is to present a faithful and literal picture of this most decisive event in our national history.

I.

THE morn of St. Calixtus dawned,
Clashings of arms resound,
When Norman William led his troops,
Straight up to Telham's mound.

II.

From the flat bay of Pevensey
By Hastings' coast their way,
They saw the Saxon hosts encamped
At *Senlac*, where they lay.

III.

Mass had been said, the troops were blessed,
A vow records each man,
To eat no flesh on this same day
Throughout life's future span.

IV.

On snow-white charger Odo sat,
The cavalry with him,
Waiting the great Duke's coming, that
The march might then begin.

V.

Three goodly companies were formed
Each led by trusty knights,
Who much experience had gained
In battle's fierce delights.

VI.

With Roger de Montgomeri,
Fitzosborne ruled the ranks
Of forces fresh from Picardy,
And of the fiery Franks.

VII.

In second order, Aimeri,
The Lord of Thôuars, came ;
And the brave sons of Fergant's race,
The Dukes of Old Bretagne.

VIII.

In the third group, the martial flower
Of Europe might be seen,
With the Duke William at their head
Noting with proud glance keen,

IX.

The Sires of Beaufon and Harcourt,
Molun and Abbeville,
Lacie, D'Aincourt and D'Asnieres,
Montfichet, Grantmesnil.

X.

In link or net-mail these equipped,
With spears and strong swords armed,
Bearing their long and pear-shaped shields
Which cross or dragon charmed.

XI.

The bowmen vested in their helms
Thick leather buskins had,
With breast-plates formed of the like hides,
Which made them lighter clad.

XII.

Now round their chief they gathered all,
Arranged in rank meanwhile,
Waiting the summons of his word,
Before him to defile.

XIII.

'Ho ! Rou de Terni !' William cried,
'The standard bear—thy right ;
Hold fast yon holy gonfanon,
And guard it by thy might.'

XIV.

'*Grant merci !*—not by me to-day
The standard shall remain,
I need both hands,' De Terni said,
'To hold my sword and rein.'

XV.

'Thou sayest well ! We ill can spare
A warrior so bold ;
Tonstain le Blanc, the son of Rou,
Our standard now shall hold.'

XVI.

Then William, armèd, save his head,
Into the saddle sprang,
Whilst shout of admiration loud
Through all the army rang.

XVII.

‘Now fight your best—no quarter give !’
The mighty Duke proclaimed ;
‘With foe before and sea behind
Our arms must be sustained.’

XVIII.

In three long lines the army moved—
Marched first the bowmen strong :
With them the light-armed infantry
In columns stretched along.

XIX.

Battalions, heavy-armed, close-packed,
The middle station graced,
The cavalry, out-flanking all,
Right and left wings embraced.

XX.

Harold, old England’s Saxon King,
Entrenched on Senlac Hill,
A formidable rival was
To Norman’s warlike skill.

XXI.

Outside the trench, ‘The Men of Kent,’
By custom claimed the van ;
Their ensign was ‘The Charger Pale’
Of Hengist and his clan.

XXII.

In Anglo-Danish wedge drawn up
They rest upon the field,
Fronted by men in heavy mail,
With battle-axe and shield.

XXIII.

The triangle within was filled
With archers, who were so
Protected from the fierce assaults
Of the opposing foe.

XXIV.

The Saxon cavalry were few—
Unlike the Norman horse ;
Mere skirmishers, in fact, who placed
In tactics their resource.

XXV.

Harold's house-carles, or body-guard,
With veterans of reserve,
The picked men of his army, called
In second troop to serve.

XXVI.

Strong palisades and breast-works high
Compassed this chosen band,
In which, for sally or retreat,
Three sorties open stand.

XXVII.

On swift light steed King Harold rode,
His brothers by his side ;
His head was like his great foe's, bare,
His Saxon brow was wide.

XXVIII.

His fair long hair on coat of mail
With parted freedom fell ;
His deep blue eye and blushing cheek
Men liked to look on well.

XXIX.

A simple, earnest, hero king,
Lacking Duke William's ire,—
The Norman's guile and tiger eye—
Yet filled with manly fire.

XXX.

Harold in turn addressed his troops ;
And ere the Saxon cheer
Which greeted well his words rang out,
The enemy was near.

XXXI.

From Hastings' coast came up the first
Band of the Norman host ;
The other companies were soon,
Each duly at its post.

XXXII.

The three parts of the Norman host
United into one,
Forming a vast and varied force,
In a strong body, come.

XXXIII.

The knights and cavalry attack
The stockade and its banks,
Whilst companies of lesser note
Assail the Saxon flanks.

XXXIV.

The sacred gonfanon amidst
The Duke's own cohort borne ;
Had straight before it and the line,
A man of mighty form,

XXXV.

Whose giant frame stood out alone,
Riding before the host ;
The song of Roland chanting loud,
Expressing warlike boast.

XXXVI.

Before the Duke, before the knights,
The foremost man of all ;
His sword up in the air he threw,
And caught it in the fall.

XXXVII.

Most like a gleeman at a fair
Was this huge warrior's mien ;
A fierce excitement through him ran,
Akin to frenzied dream.

XXXVIII.

Traillefer, the minstrel bard, was he,
In language of Romance,
Master of fiery eloquence,
In action, word and glance.

XXXIX.

When close upon the Saxon ranks,
Aloud he shouted, ' Come !
A Traillefer now your pleasure waits ;
Oh, do not keep him long !'

XL.

A brave young thane the taunt perceived ;
At once he forward rushed ;
The bard threw up his sword—caught it,
And clave him to the dust.

XLI.

A second Saxon now came forth
To combat this strange foe ;
Again the minstrel's sword went up,
And laid another low.

XLII.

Dismay the English horsemen seized—
Aghast and scared and pale ;
This juggling, chanting giant seemed
Demon, not knight, in mail.

XLIII.

Leofwine, Harold's brother, saw
Signs of ill-omened fear ;
He spurred his horse to meet the bard,
With high uplifted spear.

XLIV.

His shield received the Norman's sword,
Which into fragments flew ;
'Go, croaking bard,' he cried, 'and gain
From the foul fiend thy due !'

XLV.

Transfixéd by the Saxon spear,
Traillefer, a corpse, fell prone ;
Whilst Leofwine the Norman host
Faced fearlessly alone.

XLVI.

Into the crowd his spear he flung
With such a deadly aim ;
That a young knight by William's side
Was in that instant slain.

XLVII.

'How like ye Saxon gleemen now
Normans?' Leofwine said ;
Who slowly turned his charger round
And to his own ranks sped.

XLVIII.

A general charge, without delay,
By Norman foot was made,
Who vainly strove once and again
To force the stout stockade,

XLIX.

Within which Saxon axe and spear !
Were plied with cries of ' Out '
And Norman slaughtered infantry
Were fairly put to rout.

L.

A like repulse the Norman horse,
Were destined to sustain ;
Abortive all their efforts proved
This same stockade to gain.

LI.

Both infantry and cavalry
Fought bravely and with skill ;
Too strong for them was Saxon arm,
Too strong was Saxon will.

LII.

As at Mortemer and Varaville,
Most fertile in resource,
Was William,—all his Norseman blood
Glowing with fire and force.

LIII.

That Saxon phalanx had no rear,
He owned with bitter smart ;
Since spears received the Norman horse
And shields the Norman dart.

LIV.

The triangle invincible ;
New tactics now he brings
Into the field, with knights in groups
And quickly-forming wings,

LV.

In the broad spaces between which
His archers shower their hail :
Whilst heavy-armed foot the wedge
On every side assail.

LVI.

Harold, amidst the ' Men of Kent '
With presence, voice and hand,
Their spirits cheered whilst earnestly,
He bade them firmly stand.

LVII.

Dismounting from his steed, on foot,
To battle-axe he clave ;
Seeking the thickest of the fray,
Bravest amidst the brave.

LVIII.

Now came the shock—fight hand to hand,
Away with spear and lance ;
The axe and sword did noble work,
Checking the foe's advance.

LIX.

Like grass before the scythe mowed down
The Norman soldiers lay,
The fiery charges of their knights
Were no avail that day.

LX.

Swerved not one foot from their own ranks
The stalwart ' Men of Kent ;'
But step by step, o'er slaughtered foe,
Their march victorious bent.

LXI.

' Come ! Sires D'Aumale and De Littain
Cried William, ' onward come !'
To rescue ! Bruse and De Mortain,
Or we shall be undone !'

LXII.

A charge as of a thunderbolt
Followed the Duke's appeal ;
But harmlessly it fell on shield
And on the spear's sharp steel.

LXIII.

Soldiery of the second rank
Came forth to crush and tear
Whilst from the wedge's core, the shafts
Of archers filled the air.

LXIV.

Down rolled in charge half of these knights,
Bruse on his saddle reeled,
D'Aumale's right hand, lopped by an axe,
A bleeding stump revealed.

LXV.

To the third rank was William borne,
By mighty strength and force ;
His iron club dire slaughter made
Until his sinking horse,

LVI.

Gashed frightfully through its strong mail,
Fell dead upon the plain ;
And cry was raised throughout the host,
' Duke William ! He is slain !'

LXVII.

Had Saxon cavalry been strong,
Had William been less brave,
Hopeless it were for Normans now
To try the day to save.

LXVIII.

Their infantry with broken ranks
Were fairly turned for flight ;
When William rushed into their midst
With visage black as night.

LXIX.

' I live ! I live ! ' was the Duke's shout—
His helmet off he tore ;
' And by God's grace, will conquer yet !'
Was the grand oath he swore.

LXX.

He stayed the flight, re-formed the lines,
The panic soon dispelled ;
He mused, and at the stockade looked,
Where opening he beheld.

LXXI.

Bright'ning, another steed he chose—
A steed both strong and large ;
Then gave the password to the horse :
' Charge—to the standard—charge !'

LXXII.

Harold both saw and understood,
The purport and intent,
Duke William's horsemen had in view,
On this fresh mission sent.

LXXIII.

Elsewhere his presence needed was ;
Strict charge to Leofwine
He gave, that in the well-tried wedge,
The troops should still combine.

LXXIV.

Now once more at the dense stockade,
The combat raged anew ;
Once more both man and horse went down,
By axe in hands so true.

LXXV.

By open force Duke William learned,
The field could not be won ;
He now adopted stratagem,
His foe to overcome.

LXXVI.

A mock attack on the vanguard,
Followed by a feigned flight ;
Obtained for him the victory
Denied to valour's might.

LXXVII.

The heated Saxon blood pursuit
No longer could restrain ;
With broken phalanx, out they poured,
Down the hill-side amain.

LXXVIII.

Unwittingly the Normans fled
Towards dykes and ditches low ;
In which the Saxons hoped to drown
Their all but prostrate foe.

LXXIX.

Then William suddenly faced round,
And deadly carnage made,
Of those who had pursued his men
Far from the safe stockade.

LXXX.

The Surrey and the Sussex men
Alone had held their ground ;
In order close, they now advanced,
Down sloping Senlac's mound ;

LXXXI.

Staying the slaughter where they came,
Ambuscading the foe ;
Of whom they fearful havoc made,
In hollows strange and low.

LXXXII.

'Twixt the stockade and broken ranks
Geffroi Martel swept by—
The separated troops could not
Approach each other nigh.

LXXXIII.

The hillock's foot King Harold saw
Lined with the Norman steel ;
His vanguard now cast off, on him
Defeat had set its seal.

LXXXIV.

Moment of agony and dread,
Of hope and fierce despair—
Seconds seemed hours, nay, ages, from
Suspense too great to bear.

LXXXV.

'I see a wedge—a moving wedge,
Ha ! nobly on it cleaves,
Right through the heart of the strong foe,
Mowing down men like sheaves.'

LXXXVI.

On saying which, King Harold took
A band of veterans ;
Rushed down the hill and charged the rear
Of Bretons and Normans ;

LXXXVII.

Thus saving some few Saxon lives,
Which gained the trench with him ;
Wherein not one man had lost heart,
Or hope the day to win.

LXXXVIII.

By waning light, the outer works
Of the entrenchment stand,
As fresh and as impregnable
As when they first were manned.

LXXXIX.

The bravest Normans wistfully
Surveyed its ramparts strong ;
Which well they knew for victory,
Must to themselves belong.

XC.

Duke William, in the last *mêlée*,
More than one wound received ;
Three chargers under him were killed,
Knights' corpses strewed the mead.

XCI.

Though half the Saxons were laid low,
Entrenched the remnant stay ;
Dismay had seized the Norman troops,
Who noted where they lay.

XCII.

Odo of Bayeux now rode forth,
Upon his steed milk-white,
With surplice drawn over the mail,
Rousing the men to fight—

XCIII.

To fight for God and Holy Church,
As warriors of the Cross ;
To fight as Saints' avengers fierce,
Despite fatigue and loss.

XCIV.

' Bear-headed, crozier in my hand,
I, with my brother, ride ;
With him for victory or death,
My place is at his side.'

XCV.

On, on, in mass, the Normans come
To conquer or to die ;
They come in countless multitude,
They mount the breastworks high.

XCVI.

Helm upon helm is cloven through,
Swarm upon swarm they come ;
Mounting on carnage, on, still on ;
The breastworks must be won.

XCVII.

In vain the Saxon's mighty strength,
The Saxon valour true ;
The foremost breastworks have been forced—
List to the shout ' Ha Rou !'

XCVIII.

Won inch by inch, and foot by foot,
The second stockade falls,
From which the mangled crowd are pressed,
With slaughter that appals,

XCIX.

Into the third, which was the last,
The only place of flight ;
Where England's banner proudly waves,
With gold and jewels dight.

C.

These barricades were stronger still—
The staves and logs and wains,
Together chained, with osier walls,
A firm defence maintains.

CI.

Then William bade his archers shoot,
Slanting into the air,
That the barbed shafts might fall upon
The men encampèd there.

CII.

The deadly storm came down on those
Who looked towards heaven—to die ;
Wounded through hide and iron helm
Without a remedy.

CIII.

Most bravely, nobly, fought this band,
The dying midst the dead ;
Armed with the courage of despair,
With glory's nectar fed.

CIV.

A last assault at point remote,
Guarded by Anglo-Danes ;
Thanks to the Saxon battle-axe,
The dire attack sustains.

CV.

The Norman hoplites falling back,
Retreating down the hill,
Enticed the English from this lair
Their vengeance to fulfil.

CVI.

Lured as before, by feigning flight,
Seeming an easy prey,
To such as follow after them
Their capture to essay.

CVII.

An open sortie William spies—
Its entrance soon he takes ;
Short work with his out-numb'ring force
He now victorious makes.

CVIII.

A dauntless few make a last stand
Under their pennon's shade ;
To find on Senlac's raising top,
Their glory and their grave.

CIX.

Harold looks up to guard his head,
Raising his flashing eyes ;
He drops his axe, staggers, then falls,
And at his standard lies.

CX.

A hissing shaft his eye-ball pierced,
Touching the very brain ;
Its shaft he breaks, but let the barb
In quivering flesh remain.

CXI.

One moment rallied he again,
Sprang to his feet in dread,
Clenched his right hand and fell once more,
Before the standard—dead.

CXII.

Ere the sun set, the fight was o'er ;
On Senlac Hill was seen
The Norman standard all unfurled,
Where Harold's own had been.

CXIII.

On the same spot where Harold fell,
In after times was placed,
High Altar which the noble church
Of Battle Abbey graced.



THE GARDENS OF LUCULLUS.

A Ballad.

‘The Gardens of Lucullus’ narrates the last hours of the infamous Messalina, as they are graphically described by Tacitus in the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth chapters of the eleventh book of his ‘Annals.’ She completed a long course of licentiousness by marrying Silius, ‘the handsomest of the Roman youth’ (Annal. xi., xii.), with pomp and openness, whilst her husband, Claudius, the Emperor, was absent at Ostia. Vitellius, Narcissus and others were instrumental in her destruction, which was accomplished in the way described in the ballad, A.D. 46. Caius Silius perished before her. Seven other men of rank were executed at the same time.—*Annales C. Corn. Taciti, Lib. xi. § 26, ad fin.*

I.

THE Gardens of Lucullus,
Out by the Ostian way,
Were in a stir and tumult
On that eventful day.

II.

For Messalina thither
Had fled from Rome in fear ;
Instinct had warned her well that
Danger was drawing near.

III.

Round by a knoll of olives,
Under the cypress shade ;
Prone upon the garden * ground
Was Messalina laid.

IV.

Her mother there was with her,
And sitting by her side,†
She, who in days of sunshine
Would not with her abide.

V.

Now, when her need was direst,
Did Lepida find place,
Unto her wayward daughter
To do an act of grace.

VI.

To Messalina, living,
It seemed too hard a fate,
To give up life and pleasure
Whilst yet insatiate.

* Fusam lumi.—Tac. Ann. xi. § 37.

† Adsidente matre Lepidâ.—Tac. Ann. xi. § 37.

VII.

'Oh Claudius ! I must see thee,
Thy love cannot be dead ;
Some feeling thou must still have
For her who shared thy bed.

VIII.

'Fly ? Why am I thus hiding ?
My will has worked its way ;
Surely it can hold its own
Until another day.

IX.

'Until again I fasten
Round Claudius my toils,
And, conquering Narcissus,
Place him amongst my spoils.'

X.

Once more falling into fear,
The ghosts of murdered men,
Slain by her lust, in vision,
Filled all the air !—with them

XI.

Silius of stately mien,
Proclaiming his great wrong,*
Whispered words of omen-ill,
Then vanished in the throng.

* Tac. Ann. xi. § 26.

XII.

Narcissus a Libertus
Knew that the die was cast—
That hope for one or other
Was now for ever past.

XIII.

He had joined Vitellius
For Messalina's fall ;
Calpurnia, confessing,*
Committed him withal.

XIV.

He knew unless he hastened
The vengeful woman's fate,
Himself would fall a victim
To her undying hate.

XV.

For Claudius, returning,
From Ostia to his home,
Warmed by a luscious banquet,
To gentler mind had come.

XVI.

' Go to this wretched† woman,
And bid her in my name,
On the morrow to attend
And her own cause maintain.'

* Tac. Ann. xi. § 30.

† 'Misera,' used by Claudius of her.—Tac. Ann. xi. § 37.

XVII.

Then greatly feared the courtiers
His anger would abate,
On recollections softer
Of his connubial state.

XVIII.

Narcissus grew impatient ;
Centurions he bade,
With Tribune, 'do the deed—
Thus hath Claudius said.'

XIX.

Euodus, the freedman,
As guard and watch he sent ;
Who, in the van* of others
Into the gardens went.

XX.

Meanwhile, the band approaching,
Lepida pleaded sore :
'Forestall the dreaded coming ;
Ere then—be thou no more !'

XXI.

But with a mind corrupted
By a long course of sin,
Weakened by self-indulgence,
No good thoughts can come in.

* Isque *raptim* in hortos.—Tac. Ann. xi. § 37.

XXII.

So tears and vain complaining
From Messalina came ;
With craven lamentations
That could but end in shame.

XXIII.

She thought of her mock marriage.
In scorn of rank and fame,
That would unite for ever
Silius with her name.

XXIV.

The festival of Bacchus,*
Rich in voluptuous glare,
Rose phantom-like before her,
To taunt her lying there.

XXV.

Faces of old paramours
With loving looks—now dead—
Rousing bitter memories,
Across her spirit sped.

XXVI.

The past, to dust and ashes,
In lurid darkness turned ;
The present, in its danger,
Was as a fire that burned.

* *Insanientes Bacchæ.*—*Tac. Ann. xi. 37.*

XXVII.

‘ Mother, I am sore afraid !
From death I shrink—Oh, save !
Save me, by whatever means,
Do you, who being gave.

XXVIII.

‘ Conscience burns in agony,
As scorched by molten lead ;
The weight of sin is crushing,
How shall I fare when dead ?

XXIX.

‘ My victims !—shall I meet them
In Hades’ dark domain ?
Their biting scorn and anguish
I never can sustain.

XXX.

‘ There also surely must be
Some agony in store,
For me—prepared by Justice—
When I shall be no more.

XXXI.

‘ To live I am not worthy,
’Tis horrible to die !
Oh, mother, mother, save me !
Where do you bid me fly ?

XXXII.

The words were scarcely spoken,
In piercing, thrilling wail,
When the Roman messengers
The garden-gate assail ;

XXXIII.

Which gave at once, and then they
Soon Messalina found—
Prostrate, and weeping freely,
Still lying on the ground.

XXXIV.

The Tribune stood in silence,*
Scanning, in silent scorn,
This woman, fair and guilty,
So abject, so forlorn.

XXXV.

But the freedman's† tongue was foul,
Quite worthy of a slave,
Who from the dregs had risen,
And his own fortune made.

XXXVI.

He poured reproaches bitter,
With taunts and jeers and oaths,
Upon the hapless woman
Whose life was soon to close.

* Abstitit Tribunus per silentium.—Tac. Ann. xi. § 37.

† Libertus increpans multis ac *servilibus* probus.—Ib. xi. § 37.

XXXVII.

In silence Messalina
Heard this out-poured abuse,
Seeking at once her dagger,*
To prove its deadly use.

XXXVIII.

With trembling hand, its sharp edge
Upon a vein she pressed ;
Then, falling through her weakness,
Applied it to her breast.†

XXXIX.

Will and nerve alike were gone,
The steel would not wound deep ;
Oh ! for a fleeting moment,
The spark of life to keep.

XL.

The Tribune, coldly standing,
Watched her with unmoved face,
The dagger seized in anger,
And dealt‡ “ the blow of grace.”

* Ferrumque adcepit.—Tac. Ann. xi. § 38.

† Quod frustra jugulo ac pectori per trepidationem admovens.
—Tac. Ann. xi. § 38.

‡ Ictu tribuni transfigitur.—Tac. Ann. xi. § 38.

XLI.

Soon Claudius did briefly
The fatal tidings learn :
“ Perished hath Messalina,”*
With perfect unconcern.

XLII.

The news came at the banquet,
Nor ceased the mirth to flow ;
The how, or where, or by whom,
He never cared to know.

* *Perisse Messalinam.*—*Tac. Ann. xi. § 38.*

‡ *Nuntiatumque Claudio epulanti, non distincto suâ alienâ manu : nec ille quæsnit.*—*Tac. Ann. xi. § 38.*



ORPHEUS.

A Legend of Ancient Greece.

“ Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes, as warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto’s cheek,
And made hell grant what love did seek.”



I.

AMIDST Thessalian valleys lived
Orpheus, a singer sweet,
Who when he touched his golden harp
Drew all to his retreat.

II.

The trees bowed down their heads to hear,
The bright clouds stayed their way ;
The streamlet flowed with softer sound,
Whilst Orpheus tuned his lay.

III.

Unto his wife Eurydice
Did Orpheus ever sing ;
In winter-time of snow-capped hills,
In summer and in spring.

IV.

His life and inspiration, she
Brought music to his soul ;
Her very presence ever was
Of happiness his goal.

V.

Playing by river's bank one day,
When he had left his home,
With children for sweet company,
Fearing to be alone,

VI.

Eurydice trode on a snake,
Which bit her ; and she knew,
By sickness and by suffering that
Her days on earth were few.

VII.

Her thoughts of love for Orpheus dear,
Her latest breath expressed ;
Then, lying on the soft long grass,
She found death's solemn rest.

VIII.

No more was heard the charmèd song ;
 The golden harp, unstrung,
 Lay idly by its master where
 His hopes were all undone.

IX.

Yet not for long could Orpheus rest
 On this embittered spot :
 ' I go,' said he, ' my love to seek—
 Perchance to change her lot',

X.

With harp in hand, he sallied forth,
 To western lands less bright,
 Where in his golden cup the sun,
 Sinks with the coming night.

XI.

Still journeying on, he reached the gate
 Of Pluto's dread domains ;
 Before which awful Cerberus,
 On watchful guard remains.

XII.

Wretched and gloomy was the place,
 Sunless and sad and drear,
 With clouds and mist concentrated
 Around the portal near.

XIII.

Six-headed Cerberus alert
Was ready now to spring ;
But Orpheus tamed his nature fierce
When he began to sing.

XIV.

The monster lulled at length to rest,
Orpheus passed bravely in ;
The gate he found was open wide,
The way for him to win—

XV.

A way that led him straight unto
The palace of the king,
Most closely watched by armed men,
Without, also within.

XVI.

The guards forbade his near approach,
With words and weapons sharp ;
But he calmed their opposing fears
By playing on his harp.

XVII.

In the great hall he saw a throne,
On which sat king and queen ;
The king called out in angry voice
To Orpheus, soon as seen :

XVIII.

' Pray who are you ? How do you dare,
 Living, to come to me ?
 My chains and dungeons lastingly
 Shall be your penalty.'

XIX.

To this sad threat no answer came,
 Save from his harp of gold ;
 Orpheus poured forth his sweetest songs
 In melodies untold.

XX.

The frown of anger faded from
 The brow of Pluto's face,
 Relenting thoughts of mercy were
 Expressed in words of grace :

XXI.

' Happier than ere I felt before,
 Thy songs my spirits cheer ;
 Preferring what request, I ask,
 Thou living, comest here ?'

XXII.

' My dear Eurydice give back,
 O king !' did Orpheus pray ;
 ' Grant her once more, on the bright earth,
 With me to come and stay.

XXIII.

'She was my light, my all, my love,
And since she went away,
Sorrow and night, with sable plume,
Have darkened all my day.'

XXIV.

'So be it, Orpheus,' Pluto said,
Thy harp, thy prayer hath wrought ;
But one condition I impose,
Not to be set at nought :

XXV.

'Your own sweet wife shall after you
Ascend to upper air,
But look not back to gaze on her,
Until you see her there.

XXVI.

'If you look back, or doubt my word,
Thither she must return,
And all your sweetest songs no more
A recompence can earn.'

XXVII.

The heart of Orpheus leaped with joy ;
Eurydice again
To have and hold and call his own,
And with him to remain,

XXVIII.

Was thought of bliss, ecstatic, pure,
Unto his widowed state,
So closely was she woven with
The issues of his fate.

XXIX.

When told he had to wait until
They reached the upper earth,
This fact produced no discontent,
Nor spoiled his present mirth.

XXX.

'The little time will quickly pass,
I cannot murmur more—
Eurydice will be to me,
All that she was before.'

XXXI.

Then from the palace quickly passed,
Orpheus with joyful gait—
No bark from Cerberus, the dog,
Did his return await.

XXXII.

The beast knew well from Pluto's realm
Escape none ever knew,
Save with his master's full consent—
And this was given to few.

XXXIII.

The land of living men he reached,
When a faint streak of light,
From out the sun's horizon rose,
Making a soft twilight.

XXXIV.

Brighter and clearer gleamed the sky,
Daylight was dawning fast—
'Eurydice ! She follows me ?'
His loving nature asked.

XXXV.

Without a thought, by impulse led,
A backward gaze he took—
The earth was scarcely reached by her
Towards whom he gave the look.

XXXVI.

He looked ! Lo ! something white and pale,
His own dear wife in form,
Was all he saw—he heard her voice
In gentle accents mourn.

XXXVII.

'Oh, Orpheus ! Orpheus ! why look back,
How dearly love I you—
Again should I have been your own,
Saving this untoward view.

XXXVIII.

'To Pluto's gloom I must return,
Your broken promise claims,
Without one kiss or word of love
Eurydice's remains.

XXXIX.

She vanished, on the very spot,
Orpheus his journey stayed,
Tarrying the whilst his wasting frame
His hidden grief betrayed.

XL.

The earth, so bright with flowers and sun,
Was loved by Orpheus well ;
Soft grass and sunny streams were haunts
In which he joyed to dwell.

XLI.

Yet when he knew that he must die
He hailed the news as sweet ;
The love he bore, so strong and true,
Made death a sweet retreat.

XLII.

Upon the earth he fell asleep,
And where the sun sinks down
In golden cup at close of day
Orpheus of great renown

XLIII.

There found his lost Eurydice,
His, evermore to be,
United in enduring ties
Throughout eternity.



THE SHIPWRECK.

A Story of Old Roman Life.

The substance of the following ballad is contained in the fourth and fifth chapters of the fourteenth book of the Annals of Tacitus. The graphic account of the events recorded in it is almost a literal transcript from the pages of this truly delightful historian. The incidents relate to Agrippina the younger ;—a daughter of a mother of the same name ;—who was wife to the Emperor Tiberius. She lost two husbands, was married to her uncle Claudius, and slain by her son, Nero, A.D. 59.

I.

It was the Quinquatruan* feast,
When Nero with his court
Unto the Bay of Baïæ came,
Pregnant with boding thought.

II.

His mother Agrippina too,
Invited by her son,
Haunted by anxious fears resolved
At length that she would come.

* Held in honour of Minerva. Began March 19.

III.

The deadly feuds of the past days
Lulled to a sudden calm ;
Nero with words of blandishment
Sought to allay alarm.

IV.

'The humours of a parent claimed
Indulgence at his hand ;
The short outbreak of passion seemed
Allowance to demand.

V.

'Petty resentments not too soon
Could ever be wiped out ;
Forgetfulness and courtesy
Must bring this end about.'

VI.

In saying which he hoped to spread
The rumour well afloat,
That discord with his mother was
A circumstance remote.

VII.

In hollow words of seeming love
Did Nero clothe, in guile,
The longing for revenge which dwelt
In his bad heart meanwhile.

VIII.

Kind words which Agrippina would
Most readily receive,
Since woman's nature ever tends
In good things to believe.

IX.

To which she no exception formed :
A mother's love inclined
Her so to hope, and trust, and act,
As if her son were kind.

X.

At Tusculum and Antium,
Her stately villas were,
Whither, when wearied by the court,
She could at will repair.

XI.

Nero was born at Antium,
Sweet* Antium by the wave,
Where Fortune's famous temple was,
Home of the Volcsians brave.

XII.

The Antium† of Cicero,
Who said it bore the palm
For beauty and for majesty
And for its soothing calm.

* Gratum Antium.—Hor. Car. i., Od. 35.

† Antio nihil quietius, nihil altius, nihil amœnus. — Cic. ad. Attic. vol. iv. p. 8.

XIII,

'Twas here her troubled spirit found,
By state-craft oft opprest,
In purer life and solitude
Some intervals of rest.

XIV.

Thence, on the eve in question, round
The bold Circæan Cape,
Her galleys with their banks of oars
Their way towards Baiæ make.

XV.

Landscape of loveliness intense,
Before her wearied eye,
Swam in the melting purpled coast
And in the azure sky.

XVI.

Whilst Baiæ, rich in scented trees,
And cradled in its bay,
All sheltered from the western sun
In darksome shadow lay.

XVII.

Baiæ the beautiful ! of which
Remain the ruins grand—
Of noble palaces that stood
On that delicious strand.

XVIII.

Baïæ, that trespassed * on the sea,
Filching from its domain,
The soil which in its decadence
The main received again.

XIX.

Baïæ, epitome of life
In the old Roman time—
In phase the most luxurious—
Sure prelude of decline.

XX.

Between Misenum's jutting cape
And Baïæ's hilly bay,
By the Etruscan winding wave
The Villa Bauli lay.

XXI.

Hortensius the orator,
A century before,
Had dwelt in this same villa old,
Upon the Lucrine shore.

* *Marisque Baiis obstrepentis urges
Submovere littora,
Parum locuples continente ripâ.*

Hor. Car. ii. Od. 18.

THE SHIPWRECK.

XXII.

Thither, on disembarking, was
Proud Agrippina brought
By Nero, with all loving care,
If not with loving thought.

XXIII.

He took her by his traitor hand,
And pressed her to his breast,
With loving words of welcome which
Should place her fears at rest.

XXIV.

At Bauli many vessels lay,
Waiting their owner's will,
Riding at anchor carelessly,
On this spring evening still.

XXV.

Triremes with gilded stern and prow,
Carved in devices rare ;
The yachts of Roman nobles rich,
Floated at moorings there.

XXVI.

The gem of this flotilla was,
A highly ornate bark,
Prepared by Nero's orders, for
The parent set apart.

XXVII.

Oft it was Agrippina's wont
In triremes gay to ride ;
So taking pleasure, when she chanced
At Antium to reside.

XXVIII.

This Nero knew, and so he planned
His wicked scheme to meet
The habit of his mother when,
In her marine retreat.

XXIX.

On landing, Nero told her that,
To honour her aright,
A banquet was appointed to
Be holden that same night.

XXX.

In favour of his artifice,
The hour he named was late,
Thinking the more securely thus
To do his deed of hate.

XXXI.

Some inkling of his purpose foul
Did Agrippina gain,
Which threw her into doubt and fear,
Both mingled with disdain.

XXXII.

Easy and short would be the trip
Across the Lucrine lake,
To the imperial palace where
Her presence they await.

XXXIII.

To Baïæ she resolved to go,
Yet not the water take ;
But in a chair sedan* her way
Along the coast to make.

XXXIV.

Chastened is every feature soft,
Of that Campagnian shore ;
'Twixt Bauli and Baïæan towers
Where waters lave, not roar.

XXXV.

With regal pomp and splendour was
The table laid that eve :
When all was done that could be done
Forebodings to relieve.

XXXVI.

There flattery removed all fear,
Whilst courteously received ;
With seat assigned above† himself
What harm could be conceived ?

* Gestamine sellæ.—Tac. Ann. xiv. § 4.

† Super ipsum conlocata.—Tac. Ann. xiv. § 4.

XXXVII.

Nero, now proved a model host—
Right well he plied his guest ;
The mother in his softest tones
He at this feast addressed.

XXXVIII.

Sometimes he spoke as in old days,
When he was but a boy,
And she was all in all to him
Who was her hope and joy.

XXXIX.

Then suddenly he changed his theme,
And serious topics* broached,
As towards its end the banquet now
By slow degrees approached.

XL.

Thus by his art was lengthened out
The feasting on this night—
The deadly aim he had in view
Was ever in his sight.

XLI.

At length from Nero came the sign,
And all the guests dispersed,
As he led Agrippina forth
From the triclinium first.

* *Quasi seria consociaret.*—Tac. Ann. xiv. § 4.

XLII.

He fixed upon her, tender eyes,
Unto her bosom clave ;
As down the marble steps they went,
To where the waters lave

XLIII.

The sides of the imperial quay,
Where royal trireme lay ;
With crew in watchful readiness
To bear her on her way.

XLIV.

What can be said of this adieu,
Of mother by her son?
Was it consummate acting,
Or a touch of feeling wrung

XLV.

By thoughts of what his purpose was,
Now taking last farewell
Of parent for whom pity had
With him long ceased to dwell?

XLVI.

We cannot say, but this we know,
So well he played his part,
All past suspicions now were lulled
In Agrippina's heart.

XLVII.

Boldly she stept in the trireme,
The rowers plied the oar ;
And very soon the galley gained
Some distance from the shore.

XLVIII.

The night was bright with twinkling stars,
The placid sea was still ;
Both seemed ordained by Providence
To frustrate human ill.

XLIX.

Of all her household, only two
With Agrippina were—
One Crepereius Gallus and
Acerronia fair—

L.

The former standing by the helm,
The latter at the feet
Of her reclining mistress leaned,
Engaged in converse sweet :}

LI.

Of how at length repentance worked
In the unworthy son,
And how the mother had regained,
His favour lost—now won.

LII.

When at a given signal fell
In with its load of lead,
The cabin roof, to crush at once
The mother on her bed.

LIII.

The shock bore Crepereius down,
Where struck, in death he falls ;
But Agrippina's life was saved
Through strength of cabin walls.

LIV.

On Anicetus'* plan, the ship
Should now in pieces come,
And finish well and thoroughly
The hellish work begun.

LV.

It failed—and so confusion great
Prevailed throughout the crew ;
The secret purpose of the trip
Was known but to a few.

LVI.

The rowers said, 'To us it seems
(According as we think)
The best plan is, to cant the ship,
Making her quickly sink.'

* A libertus.—Tac. Ann. xiv. § 3.

LVII.

But such a startling project failed
Amongst themselves to find
Unanimous consent thereto,
Or bring them to one mind.

LVIII.

The other portion of the crew
Resisted might and main,
That so into the lake they might
An easier passage gain.

LIX.

With loud imprudent* voice cried out,
Impelled by sudden fear,
Just then, rash Acerronia,
In tones both strong and clear :

LX.

‘I Agrippina am ; would you
The Emp’ror’s mother seek
To plunge without authority
Into the silent deep.’

LXI.

At once towards her they rushed in haste,
Armed with what came to hand—
The poles and oars and floating spars
That on a vessel stand.

* Acerronia *imprudens* clamat.—Tac. Ann. xiv. § 5.

LXII.

And so her life she quickly lost,
Whilst Agrippina lay—
Untouched amidst the very gang
Whose business 'twas to slay.

LXIII.

A shoulder wound was all her hurt ;
She swam* without alarm,
Into the lake, which floated her,
Away from present harm.

LXIV.

Then, meeting with some sailing craft,
Which ply about the bay,
One bore her through Lake Lucrine to
Bauli ere break of day.

LXV.

Where, lying in the darkling morn,
Musing on her escape,
She saw her son's full cruelty
Its proper colours take.

LXVI.

His letters, honours, words of love,
Coupled with the night's work,
Revealed the baseness of a breast,
In which worst passions lurk.

* Nando.—Tac. Ann. xiv. § 5.

LXVII.

In darkened room at Bauli look !
A weeping woman there,
Is seen, whose face of anguish tells
A tale of blank despair ;

LXVIII.

Whose visions of a clearer sky
And a serener air ;
Are shadowed by the heavy clouds
Of mingled fear and care.

LXIX.

Her wounded spirit sunk in grief
Under such burning hate,
In hopeless agony she stayed,
Waiting her coming fate.



ERÔS.



IN the exquisite myth which forms the subject of the following lines, Plato has given a conception of love which is human in its deep pathos, and true when tested by the stern sad realities of life. Love was to Anacreon all brightness and sunshine; the little boy either playing amongst the roses, or drying his bow and arrows by the kindly fire, and wounding his host in return for his hospitality. He was to Bion the infant whom he sought to instruct in pastorals, but who filled his master's ear with *erotula* instead—love ditties that he could not forget. Nymph, horn, hoop, quoit, butterfly, swan, are but a few of the accessories with which he is associated by the several poets. In the several traditions different parentages are assigned to Cupid—Plato therefore had as good a right to invent his own theogony as anyone else. Whilst many are acquainted with the traditional Erôs of the poets, few, comparatively speaking, are familiar with the soberer picture of the same personage which is given to us by the philosopher. The myth is to be found in the Banquet of Plato (cciii. B. C. D.).

I.

It was the night in heaven,
With the immortals joy—
A banquet being given
A birth to glorify.

II.

Aphroditè's birth-day,
Holden with solemn mirth ;
None of the gods away,
All honouring that birth.

III.

The foam-born One was then
From a sea of glory thrown,
To dwell with gods and men
In heaven, or earth, to roam.

IV.

Invention, the true son
Of fertile Planning's race,
With all the rest had come
The festive board to grace.

V.

Right merry the gods were—
Abundance all around ;
Flashes of merry wit
On ev'ry side resound.

VI.

A needy outcast came
Some trifle to implore—
Twas Poverty by name—
She stayed without the door.

ERÔS.

VII.

Whilst ling'ring there, she viewed
Invention, Planning's son,
By nectar's power subdued,
Into the garden come.

VIII

In Zeus's shady grove
He sought his drowsy rest ;
Nor cared he soon to move,
With heavy sleep oppressed.

IX.

She plotted that he might
Play her a husband's part,
And she became that night
A mother by her art.

X.

And Erôs was the child
Who sprang from their embrace,
The product undefiled
Of an immortal race.

XI.

Begotten on the day
When Venus too was born ;
Love longs by her to stay,
Apart from her, forlorn.

XII.

He waits upon her so,
As her attendant sprite ;
Wherever she may go,
Her presence his delight.

XIII.

Aphrodite's beauty
Chains him to her side—
Beauty's love, his duty,
There makes him to abide.

XIV.

Like Poverty, indeed,
His mother's guise Love wears—
Ofttimes in sorest need
Severest hardships dares.

XV.

And he is ever poor,
Nor beautiful nor fair ;
Wand'ring from door to door
Alone in midnight air,

XVI.

And without home or shoes
Or bed,—on the cold ground,
Squalid, depressed by woes,
In the drear streets is found.

XVII.

A sorry guest, I ween,
Since poor and dirty too ;
E'en Poverty would screen,
Her son, from her own view.

XVIII.

Within, the father's mind
Asserts its lawful sway—
Courage and craft combined
Must win their rightful way

XIX.

Dauntless and very bold,
Contrivances he weaves,
His hapless ones to hold,
Whom he with guile deceives.

XX.

Love holds a middle state,
'Twixt two extremes the mean :
His mother and her mate
Both represented seem.

XXI.

Rich in his father's wealth,
All sunshine and all smiles,
In the full glow of health,
He many hearts beguiles.

XXII.

Immortal at one time,
And then from death's dark door,
Rising again sublime
Just as he was before.

XXIII.

Yet knowledge is the wealth
Which, though not wise, he loves ;
He longs for it himself,
His ignorance he proves.

XXIV.

Deathless and rich and wise
Is Erôs at his flood :
At ebb he nearly dies
Like mortal flesh and blood.

XXV.

Erôs, a double child,
Chameleon-like his state,
Now tame—now very wild,
His portraiture we take.

XXVI.

A needy seeker, he
In vain desires to find ;
That which to him shall be,
Sufficient for his mind.

ERÓS.

XXVII.

Condemned to toil and strife,
By poverty pursued,
He ever shall survive—
Immortal, unsubdued.

XXVIII.

Yet, clad in meanest guise,
A mighty power Love sways ;
One, which none dare despise,
One, which each heart obeys.



THE BISHOP'S WALK.

An Anecdote of a Northern Diocese nearly half a Century ago.



I.

My Lord the Bishop one morning went out,
From Palace to City to look about ;
He strolled towards the Close at an easy pace,
Having gained his prize in life's earnest race.

II.

He gazed at the lofty Cathedral towers,
And cast up by guess the number of hours,
If the span of his life should lengthened be,
To be spent in diocesan duty.

III.

My Lord the Bishop was now in his prime,
His years scarcely numbered forty-and nine ;
Successful head-master of public school,
He was called over elder boys to rule.

IV.

Well-pleased was the Prelate with what he saw,
Much better by far than he thought before :
The Minster looked grand, and its Close looked warr
The church and its grounds were in proper form.

V.

The service within this most sacred fane,
Parochial, not choral, and perfectly plain,
Not tempting the Bishop's musical ear,
Little longer he cared to tarry here.

VI.

Down Kirkgate he passed with a smiling face,
The townspeople seeking to win by grace,
He traversed the High Street with stately step,
Saluting with ease such folk as he met.

VII.

Returning home by a different way,
A large heap of stones by the roadside lay ;
By which was seated a sturdy old man,
On a three-legged stool—with coat and can.

VIII.

A likely subject, the Bishop had found,
By which the tone of class-feeling to sound ;
So he stayed his course, and he watched awhile,
And honoured the man at length with a smile.

IX.

' Good morning, my friend,' in greeting he said,
' You seem to work hard for your daily bread ;
The crust you have earned cannot but taste sweet,
A recompense toil bestows—as is meet.'

X.

' Aye, who may be thou, that talkest so fine,'
Said the man, ' of the crust on which I dine ?
I'se ready e'en now to gie ye a treat,
If ye care to take my place on this seat.'

XI.

' You really don't know, my good man, I see,
What rank and position belong to me ;
Come to the Minster to-morrow—I preach :
As your Bishop am I sent here to teach !'

XII.

The breaker of stones, with a cunning leer,
Looked up to the Prelate and spake without fear :
" So ye be the Bishop—we'el, dinna ye ken
I'se going to-morrow to preach my'sen ?'



FORETHOUGHT.

THE SONG OF THE SYRENS.

A Story of Ancient Greece.

Παράπλει τὴν ψῆδον, θάνατον ἐργάζεται.

‘Sail past the song—it worketh death.’

S. CLEMENT ALEX., *Protrep.* § xii.

I.

ULYSSES having left behind
The fair-haired Circè's isle,
His dark-prowed ship sailed gaily on,
Cutting the main meanwhile.

II.

'Till suddenly the prosp'ring breeze,
Lulled to a fearful calm ;
Ulysses with his shipmates all,
Were stricken with alarm.

III.

Full well they knew that they drew nigh
Unto the Syrens' seat,
And woe betide the man who stayed
To hear their voices sweet.

IV.

For they were beautiful in form,
And beautiful their song;
Whilst all who came within their range
Were forced to tarry long.

V.

Their voice made a beguiling strain
Which never ceased to charm;
And charming, led their victims on
To direst woe and harm.

VI.

To home and friends none e'er return
Who land upon their shore ;
The ship and crew alike are lost,
Destroyed for evermore.

VII.

The wise Ulysses, knowing this,
Circe's advice obeyed ;
He stopped the ears of all his men
With molten wax inlaid.

VIII.

Himself he ordered to be bound
Securely to the mast ;
With cables strong, that could not fail
To hold him tight and fast.

IX.

They come within the witching range,
And hear the Syrens' say :
'O magnified Ulysses! stop
Thy black ship's onward way.

X.

'We please and teach by our sweet voice :
The woes of Troy we know,
With secrets of the fruitful earth ;—
Bid thy men cease to row.'

XI.

This voice Ulysses' heart entranced ;
By signs he begged his men
His bonds to loose, his cords untie,
And him set free again.

XII.

They could not hear, but they could see
The spell that o'er him came,
Their oars they plied with greater speed,
To gain the healthful main.

XIII.

Whilst firmly bound, the great chief's will
In mild abeyance lay ;
The deafened crew were not beguiled,
But hastened on their way.

XIV.

Instead of doing his behest
Eurylochus arose,
Whilst Perimedes helpèd him
To draw the knots more close.

XV.

When noting from Ulysses' mien,
The song had died away
They took the wax from out their ears,
And cast his cords away.

XVI.

Thus, by obedient forethought, were
Ulysses and his crew
Saved from the fate of pleasure's lure,
Which every man must rue.

XVII.

Forewarned, forearmed, they passèd through
Peril both sure and deep ;
Their lives preserved, their honour pure
They gained the power to keep.

XVIII.

Thus shall it ever fare with those,
Temptation who avoid;
Through snares and dangers shall they pass
Unharm'd and undecoy'd.



JUSTICE AND SHAME.



'Justice and shame' is the substance of a fable which is to be found in the Protagoras of Plato (320 D—322 E). Prometheus, the son of Iapetos and Clymené, represents Forethought, and also the blessings which flow from it in the shape of inventions, institutions, and the like. Epimetheus, on the other hand, stands for carelessness and Afterthought; hence the proverb 'Caring does not belong to Epimetheus, but repenting does.' Carefulness and carelessness are well contrasted in this fable or myth of Plato, but the main purpose of its teaching is to show how the double sense of justice and shame must lie at the root and foundation of all civilised society. The definitions of both these moral attributes, which are given in the text, are taken from the dialogue entitled *EUTHYPHRON*, or Holiness: that of justice from p. 12, E; of shame, from the same page, 12, C. The fable is also worthy of note as giving from the pen of Plato, an account of the successive epochs in the progress of the formation of society.

I.

THERE was an age, far back in the world's date,
When Gods alone there were;
And all the mortal race, still uncreate,
In being did not share.

II.

Within the earth, and at the destined time
Their fashioning began,
Then, earth with fire, in due amounts combine
The Gods, upon a plan.

III.

Into the realms of light 'twas time to bring—
Adorned, fully prepared,
That all may see—every created thing,
Noting how each had fared.

IV.

NOW EPIMETHEUS on himself imposed
Each faculty to give ;
Just as the need of each one was disclosed,
To help it best to live.

V.

'When I my part have played, PROMETHEUS must
Himself the lots inspect,
And any inequality adjust
Resulting from neglect.'

VI.

And speaking thus did EPIMETHEUS make,
The distribution due :
In which each living creature did partake,
Gaining some powers new.

VII.

He ordered that the strong should not be swift,
Unto the weak gave speed ;
To armed or unarmed, tempering each gift
By care and thoughtful deed.

VIII.

Their very greatness saved the great from harm,
The small could flee or hide,
So they, on the first notice of alarm,
Escaped before they died.

IX.

Against the seasons' aye revolving change
Thick hair or skin he gave,
Adapted to the temp'rature's wide range,
From cold or heat to save.

X.

As to the food, he took the greatest care,
For all, providing well ;
Pleasant, in rich abundance and to spare,
That none by hunger fell.

XI.

Thus were the lower animals endowed,
His means were fully spent ;
Whilst EPIMETHEUS, with a feeling proud,
Rested in self content.

XII.

Yet man was left, uncared for, undarned,
 Naked, unarmed and weak,
 As if by other races to be scorned.
 By need compelled to seek

XIII.

From alien sources, foreign to his own,
 The simplest means of life ;
 To ever gather where he had not sown,
 Presuming on his right.

XIV.

PROMETHEUS, on his coming, looks at man
 In doubt what best to do ;
 Desiring progress for him, and advance
 Both permanent and true.

XV.

So now from Vulcan and Minerva both,
 Filches he guile* and fire ;
 To save the human race—and nothing loth,
 Kindles Jove's harmful ire :

XVI.

The arts mechanical, in part divine,
 Taught men to build, and speech ;
 Raise altars, statues of the Gods sublime,
 And further progress reach.

* *τὴν ἐν τεχνῶν σοφίαν οὖν περὶ.*

PLATO, *Protag.* 321, D.

XVII.

Nomadic life was by these means sustained,
Its ruder wants supplied ;
Shelter and clothing, food in plenty gained,
With other things beside.

XVIII.

Ambition next assailed the human breast,
To cities found and build ;
For social love became a power confessed
In people growing skilled.

XIX.

The art political Jove clearly saw,
To save from ruin great,
Was indispensable in peace or war,
To guard the perfect state.

XX.

To men he bade old Hermes swift convey,
JUSTICE with SHAME combined ;
A twofold sense—man's inner soul to sway,
And discipline his mind.

XXI.

When Hermes asked 'As of the other arts
Is distribution made ?
The art of healing, or the handicrafts ?'
Jove this injunction gave :

XXII.

'Dispense alike to all JUSTICE and SHAME—
Exception let be none ;
For how can cities, worthy of the name,
Without these two, become ?

XXIII.

'Exact in my high name unchanging law,
That all of both partake ;
In human breast to dwell for evermore :—
This firm decree I make.

XXIV.

'JUSTICE, a part of holiness, to God,
Is due ; towards man, is right ;
SHAME, with its saving fear, at all times serves,
To guide men by its might.'



THE STORY OF ARISTÆUS.

A Myth of Ancient Greece.



Aristæus, the son of Cyrenè, was a symbol of the best and bravest life, associated with peace and plenty, being also blessed from on high.

I.

AMONG Thessalian hills and vales,
Upon the mountain side,
Cyrenè wandered free as deer,
Of all the maids the pride.

II.

For strength of arm and speed of foot
She stood without a peer,
Her spear and dagger all the beasts
Beheld with rightful fear.

III.

The loom and spindle she disdained,
With luxuries of food,
Repasting under branching trees,
So hardy was her mood.

IV.

Upon Peneus' windy bank,
A lion at her came,
She conquered him by might of arm—
He lay before her slain.

V.

Apollo Phœbus watched the strife,
And asked the wise Cheiron
(Centaur and master of his youth),
' Whence came that maiden yon ?'

VI.

Who, smiling, scanned Apollo's face,
And answered—' There are keys
Hidden, love's sweetest prison-house
Unlocking with great ease,

VII.

' The leaves of spring and grains of sand,
By river or by sea ;
The paths and ends of sons of men,
Alike are known to thee.

VIII.

‘ If I must match thy wisdom deep,
Listen to what shall be ;
The maiden wooed and won, thou’lt bear,
Thy bride o’er the dark sea.

IX.

‘ In halls in Libyan land far off,
Nourished by every fruit ;
She’ll bear a son, Aristæus,
Worthy of such a root.

X.

‘ The graceful HOURS on him shall shed
Ambrosial nectar pure ;
So that the doom of mortal men,
He never shall endure.’

XI.

Apollo Phœbus smiling said,
‘ Thou well deserv’st thy fame ;
Cheiron ! thy match in wisdom’s depth,
No mortal man can name.

XII.

‘ I go to bear Cyrenè home
To Cyrenaic land,
Where great and mighty cities shall
Be built and ever stand.’

XIII.

Cyrenè came to Libyan soil,
Her wondrous son she bore ;
The HOURS decreed Aristæus
Should live for evermore.

XIV.

On Libyan plains he tends his flocks ;
Rich harvests from the earth
Fill well his granaries with grain,
His soul likewise with mirth.

XV.

The bees their sweetest honey wrought,
Flocks gave their softest wool ;
The cornfields waved with ripest ear
That he might gain his full.

XVI.

No blight assailed the luscious grape,
Cultured by his own hand ;
No sickness vexed the pastured herds
In his high-favoured land.

XVII.

The dwellers there said—‘ Strife and war
Bring no such gifts. Proclaim
Aristæus the pledge of peace,
In honour to remain.’



THE ROBIN.

I.

WHEN the sky was grey,
Sitting on a spray,
Its presence was a prophecy.
When the sky was bright,
And the ground was white,
That passed into a verity.

II.

When the frost had gone,
And the sun was warm,
Its absence was a prophecy.
Then the summer came,
With its glowing train,
Driving the bird from memory.

III.

On the tree of life,
Sits Care, bird of night,
Its presence is a prophecy.
Realized is ill,
There it sitteth still,
Abiding as a surety.

IV.

Joy succeeds to grief,
Bringing sweet relief,
Its absence is a prophecy.
Care has flown away,
Night gives place to day,
Its going speaketh clemency.

V.

By no word spoken,
Yet by true token,
Earth's many voices to men preach.
By duly musing,
And their signs using,
Each secret meaning thou shalt reach.



THE BOOKSTALL.



I.

I LOVE to tarry at a stall
Where no fat oxen feed,
And nothing rural can be found,
Not e'en the useful steed.

II.

Nor at a higher stall than this,
In Minster's sacred choir ;
Where dignity combined with ease,
Might satisfy desire.

III.

A stall from Church and farm remote,
Unknown to rustic swain,
One which in closest streets is found,
To find—I count my gain.

IV.

My stall consists of dirty boards
Well covered with old books,
'Mongst which I spy the ELZEVIRS
Secreted in their nooks.

V.

Perchance an ALDINE classic may
Delight my ravished eyes ;
In trembling and expectant haste
I bear away the prize.

VI.

A PLANTIN falls a ready prey,
Held firmly in the hand,
To signify possession, whilst
The board is further scanned.

VII.

FROBENIUS too—his colophon
I note on the last sheet,
And count my shillings o'er and ask,
'Can I afford this treat ?'

VIII.

Of the six STEPHENS—men of print—
The ' Henry ' of renown,
Graces a well-lined title page,
Now offered for a crown.

IX.

Many editions quaint and rare,
I eye with wistful looks,
Turning a back reluctant on
This stall so rich in books.

X.

For a few pence or shillings spent
With knowledge, care, and thought,
At the poor shabby book-stalls' board,
May months of joy be bought.

XI.

Whilst then I wend my homeward way,
All longing to explore
The treasures which I bear with me,
And o'er their pages pore,

XII.

I take a retrospective glance
At booklore and the board,
And at the sober pleasure which
They thoughtful minds afford.

XIII.

A twofold place this bookstall is ;
Of living thoughts the store ;
Preserved in stained and musty page,
To find new life once more.

XIV.

Thoughts which once sprang from brains that now
Are dust and own no name,
Received into another's mind,
In which they live again ;

XV.

Will speak again in other page,
And then again will lie
In treatise growing obsolete,
When some few years pass by.

XVI.

Of death—a chronicle of death
Can we the bookstall call,
Dead writers, printers, publishers,
Dead binders, owners all.

XVII.

A charnel-house of nobler kind,
With dead remains well filled,
Of those who wrought—then died—with fame
Hoping their names to gild.

XVIII.

Beyond the burial ground or tomb
Of death the heralds clear,
These books from centuries descend
Our little day to cheer.



THE LOST IDEA.



‘The longing for some lost idea.’

I.

STANDING on lofty moorland rock,
Hills above hills in outline clear ;
Still seeks the eye for what is not :
That which is wanting forms the lost idea.

II.

Just so, from learning's Pisgah height,
Gazing with knowledge worthy of a seer ;
The scholar something sighs to learn :
That which is wanting forms the lost idea.

III.

Listening to master symphonies,
Harmonious cords and discords catch the ear ;
Echoes of unheard melodies :
That which is wanting forms the lost idea.

IV.

Heart answers heart, by love constrained,
The law of perfect sympathy whilst here ;
Forbids its full fruition be attained :
That which is wanting forms the lost idea.

V.

The picture full of fire and life
Hovers around perfection's mystic sphere ;
Around, but not within it quite :
That which is wanting forms the lost idea.

VI.

Success has crowned the wished-for aim,
Purchased by toil through many a year ;
The inner void remains the same :
That which is wanting forms the lost idea.

VII.

The purged eye of faith soars high,
Seeking a vision which doth not appear
To bring the things of heaven nigh :
That which is wanting forms the lost idea.

VIII.

Thus sadly must it ever be,
Man's present portion only to come near ;
Not gaining in entirety :
That which is wanting forms the lost idea.



THE DYING MOTHER.



I.

A MOTHER lay
Passing away
On child-birth's bed of death ;
All hope had fled,
As on that bed,
She breathed with feeble breath.

II.

The babe beside
Its mother cried ;
Unconsciously it knew
Of parting nigh
In dying sigh
Which that sick mother drew.

• III.

A mystery
Which tenderly
Softens the hardest heart ;
A life given,
A life taken,
Once one—and now to part.

IV.

The strong life gone,
The babe forlorn
Thrown upon alien care ;
Without (in fears
Of coming years)
A mother's love to share.

v.

The last sad thought
The spirit wrought,
In that poor suffering frame,
Was for the boy,
The hoped-for joy,
Through whom her death-pang came.

VI.

' I shall never
Again ever
Rise from this couch of pain ;

My little one,
Life just begun,
O God ! his life sustain.

VII.

' You will not hear,
O baby dear !
A mother's words of love ;
Yet will I pray
For you alway,
Watching you from above.'

VIII.

She looked, ' Oh, save
My darling babe !'
Last token of unrest :
Her spirit bright,
In God's own light,
Now shines in glory blest.

IX.

Her (who life gave,
In the grave laid,)
Recall with tender thought.
For the future,
Strive to nurture,
The life so dearly bought.



THE EMPTY CASK.

A Parable.



I.

BESIDE an empty wine-cask stayed
A man both lean and wan ;
He smelled and looked, and smelled again,
And still he tarried long.

II.

It was as if he could not leave
The used-up barrel here,
As if some great attraction drew
And kept him ling'ring near.

III.

It may be former memories
Around this cask entwine,
Recalling scenes of past carouse,
When he had quaffed its wine.

IV.

Or did its empty state suggest
A contrast to him clear,
Between a past and present case—
Present and past most dear?

V.

Whatever now the cause might be,
Away he could not tear
Himself from that which proved to be
The object of his care.

VI.

The neighbours came by ones and twos
Outside to look at him;
To stand and gaze at empty casks
Was such a funny whim.

VII.

So one of those who came to see
The barrel-gazer said;
'Expecting what from yonder vat,
Are you to search it led?

VIII.

'The wine is spent, its odour gone,
There's nothing to obtain;
The very staves are now so dry,
They scarcely show a stain.'

IX.

He answer made—‘ There was a time
When in this cask my fame
And name and character were lost,
Drowned there beyond reclaim.

X.

‘ So hardly won—so quickly lost,
A living lesson see ;
A cask like this may steal your all,
And leave you poor like me.

XI.

‘ I came in hope it might give back
A portion of its prey ;
And if in sober earnestness
You mark the words I say—

XII.

‘ A manhood broken, and the cask,
When side by side they stand,
Proclaim a parable of life
Which all can understand.’



THE POET.

Ἔδρε πᾶσαν ἀμβροσίαν ἐπέων.

PINDAR, *Pyth. Ode iv. l. 532.*

I.

‘He found a fountain of ambrosial words ;
Exponents of immortal thought ;
Deep in his heart’s recess, which ever welled,
And gently poured his spirit forth.

II.

‘He found a fountain of ambrosial words ;
Attuned to melody within ;
What can he do but let his thoughts have sway,
And in harmonious accents sing ?

III.

‘ He found a fountain of ambrosial words ;’
Shadows of images divine,
Revealing secrets of the spirit world,
The treasures of its mystic mine.

IV.

‘ He found a fountain of ambrosial words ;’
Touching the soul’s most tender cords ;
Moving, evoking sympathies akin,
By power poetry affords.

V.

‘ He found a fountain of ambrosial words ;’
Willing that other men should drink
Of that which quenched his burning thirst so well,
By leading earnest minds to think.

VI.

‘ He found a fountain of ambrosial words ;’
And dare we scorn his abstract life ?
Removed so far above the busy throng,
Apart from all its chafe and strife.

VII.

‘ He found a fountain of ambrosial words ;’
‘ He found’—the gift was planted there,
By the same power, which at the first ordained,
That others in the gift should share.

VIII.

'He found a fountain of ambrosial words ;'
Rejoice we in their teachings clear ;
That in our saddest hours of deepest gloom,
Their numbers may our spirits cheer.



FAILURE.

‘Καὶ ποθέσω καὶ μάομαι.’
‘I both yearn and strive.’

SAPPHO, Frag. 26. Bergk.

I.

THE sky is clear, the air is bright ;
A far off mountain I descry,
And long to tread its airy height,
Which other feet have firmly trode.
Spell-bound and halting I remain,
Yet yearn to follow on their road.

II.

A work of art before me lies ;
Whilst I its beauties sadly scan,

FAILURE.

I blame the hand which never tries,
To exercise its powers and skill ;
Producing nothing worthy of
Its gifts, its means, and of my will.

III.

The open page excites my soul,
Waking a sleeping nature there,
Engend'ring thoughts beyond control.
Alas ! this page is writ by hand
Not mine—no produce of my brain
Hath ever thus to life been fann'd.

IV.

The loved one comes—all eyes dilate,
Pure peace and gladness flow around ;
The presence seems to radiate,
An atmosphere of hope and joy ;
I lack the power to influence
The heart of either man or boy.

V.

I yearn the whilst and sorely strive,
And seem to strive without a hope,

That at my goal I shall arrive.
I may have yearned too much before,
And striv'n too hard to gain mine end.
Enough ! I make one trial more.



HOPE.



‘ . . . χρη ἀγαθὸν
Ἐλπίδ’ ἀνδρὶ μέλειν.’

‘A man ought to cherish good hope.’

PINDAR, Isth. Ode viii., l. 32.

I.

OH to mount higher still and higher !
Fresh in expectation and desire ;
Then can man’s spirit cope
With weariness, delay, and sorrow ;
He yet awaits a glorious morrow,
Sustained by deathless hope.

II.

Ruins—fragments of the former years ;
Broken endeavours, shadowy fears,
Scattered on all sides view ;

Amidst the wreck FORLORN HOPE wanders,
Who, as she very sadly ponders,
Seeks to rebuild anew.

III.

From out the midst of sorrow's darkness,
Which holds in stricken soul its fastness,
Shineth a feeble light :
A speck which daily waxes brighter,
As with its increase grief grows lighter—
Hope is this meteor bright.

IV.

Rugged the path of life, rocky, steep ;
It sorely tries the ascending feet
Of those who seek to mount
And gain success's treacherous height.
Hope gives motive power ; is the soul's might,
Endeavour's springing fount.

V.

Thee, let me then cherish, kindly one,
For having consented to become
Both energy and stay
Of this poor oft-defeated being,
Which wins its goal alone by seeing
Thee at its side alway.



THE SICK CHILD.



I.

A MOTHER sat in sorrowful mood,
A cradle was by her side ;
And as she sat there in solitude,
She rocked it awhile and cried.

II.

For a tiny life was held therein—
Her beautiful little boy,
With a fair clear skin and golden hair,
His mother's deep pride and joy.

III.

She sat and watched him many an hour,
Whilst her heart was full of fears ;
She thought the time of parting had come,
Hence her eye was dimmed with tears.

IV.

She deemed, moreover, she was alone,
With her treasure doubly dear ;
That save herself and her baby-boy,
No being of life was near.

V.

Yet *three*, not two, were now in the room,
A stranger had come unseen ;
With evil intent—in viewless form,
The mother and babe between.

VI.

A spirit was standing close at hand,
Who, watching the laboured breath,
Was biding its time to claim its prey ;
And the shadow's name was DEATH.

VII.

It shed its light on the baby's face,
And the paleness turned to blue ;
It cast a chill at the mother's heart
When she saw the changing hue.

VIII.

The silent grief, as a heavy weight,
Had subdued her spirits' strength,
Sorrow was turning to agony
As o'er her babe she bent.

IX.

Before God she bowed her stricken'd soul,
And poured out her heart in prayer ;
Lo ! *four* in the room were with her now,
The ANGEL OF LIFE was there.

X.

Colour returned to the waning cheek :
The eyes which had long been closed,
Opened once more to the light of day,
Whilst the mother's hopes arose.

XI.

The change from the door of death to life
Brought a joy for words too deep ;
But in melting loving thankfulness,
Tears flowed which were sweet to weep.

XII.

Then the tender love of Nature's law,
Passed into a hallowed bond ;
Since by closer, dearer ties were knit
The babe and his mother fond.



FIRST LOVE.

ERÔS, the Greek divinity of Love, was amongst 'the earliest races of men held to be synonymous with the dawn — 'there was but one similitude for the roseate bloom that betrays the dawn of love—it was the blush of the day—the rising of the sun. "The sun has risen," they said when we say "I love,"' (Max Müller). This idea of the VEDA is embodied in the following lines.

I.

It stole so sweetly o'er me,—
So gentle and so dumb,—
I never thought it could be
Life's master passion come.

II.

It came like rosy morning,
And joy was in its train,
With brightest hue adorning
The soul it sought to gain.

FIRST LOVE.

III.

Like vernal zephyr's fanning,
Or shadows of the gloom,
My strength of heart unnerving,
It led me to my doom.

IV.

Yet so surely it became,
My pearl of greatest price,
The one jewel I would name
That did for all suffice ;

V.

Being my soul's one star,
Which guided all my way ;
Ever shining from afar,
Turning my night to day.

VI.

And when it set—too truly,
A numbness of the soul,
Token of my agony,
Seized me beyond control.

VII.

O'er the dreary waste of years,
I muse upon the time,
When my first love with its fears
Was in its strength and prime ;

VIII.

And the heart, alas ! so cold,
Once glowing with desire,
Holding but—since growing old—
The ashes of the fire.

IX.

On the shrine of memory,
O ERÔS ! Love and Dawn,
Only can I offer Thee
Abiding now forlorn—

X.

A semblance and a shadow,
A waif from Time's vast sea,
That alike in ebb and flow,
Once brought Thee near to me.



THE WHIM—A CONCEIT.

I.

WHAT is that which sports around
Wav'ring fancy's border ground,
With fantastic garnish crowned?
One just found ;
New-born child.

Now to-day it holds its sway,
And its follies none gainsay,
Bending all to its own way ;
Without stay,
Foolish wild.

II.

Birth it had from dimpled chin,
Merry eyes and figure slim,
Nature full of fire within :

Let me win,
One like this :
Then upon her whim I wait,
Be it early, be it late,
She will never satiate,
Nor abate,
Loving kiss.



THE BEAUTIFUL.

ἔστιν ὀλίγον τὸ καλόν.

ANTIPHANES—Greek Comic Poet, B.C. 388.

I.

'THE Beautiful is rare,
Cast not o'er common life and sight
Surely not all can share,
The vision of an inward light.

II.

'The Beautiful is rare,'
Yet Beauty takes more forms than we
With unpurged eyes may dare,
Or may aspire to see.

III.

‘The Beautiful is rare,’
In lowest guise—of outward mien,
When it bedecks the fair,
Gilding with glory and with sheen.

IV.

‘The Beautiful is rare,’
Nay—rarer in the soul I sigh,
So few for beauty care
Appealing to the inward eye.

V.

‘The Beautiful is rare,’
Adorning moral strength—with grace
Enduing those who bear
Sublime their lot—their burdens face.

VI.

‘The Beautiful is rare,’
Here in this shadow world of night.
It is all Beauty, where
Pure Beauty shines with undimmed light.



JOYS.

Ἄλλὰ τί μοι τῶν ἡδῶς.

HOMER, *Iliad*, xviii. 80.

I.

To win the race,
In life's keen chase,
For what the world holds dear ;
Is a pleasure,
Without measure,
To votaries sincere.

II.

To muse, and lie,
Under a sky,
Warm with a summer's sun ;
Gives a calm joy,
Helping to buoy,
The soul of many a one.

III.

To feel the eye
Of love is nigh,
The soft breath on the face ;
Begets a rapture
That doth capture
Love in its soft embrace.

IV.

In duty done,
There lies the sum,
Of conscience placed at rest ;
A boon most great,
Marking a state
Of blessedness confessed.



LOOKING SPRING.

Ἐὰν θ' ὁρώωσα.

THEOCRITUS, Idil. 13, v. 45.

I.

SHE came tripping light as fawn ;
(It was early summer's morn)—
On the closely shaven lawn ;
Child of grace,
Looking Spring.
Golden was her waving hair,
Free her motion as the air,
Saying—' Catch me if you dare ;
Let us race,
Now begin.'

II.

Panting, blushing, half in fear,
When she found me drawing near,
Captured—more than ever dear ;

Her I kissed ;
Cozening.
Closely folding in my arms,
Guarding her from fancy's harms,
Soothing all her coy alarms ;
This she wished ;
Looking Spring.



THE FUTURE.

*Ἀμέραι ἐπιλοιποὶ
Μάρτυρες σοφώτατοι.*

PINDAR, Olymp. Od. I., v. 53.

I.

I do not care to ask the past,
That o'er its fate the die has cast,
The value of its fruit.
Let it be gently put to rest,
With all emotions of the breast
Which in that time had root.

II.

The days to come are my concern,
That in the future I may earn

All merit that I can.
Days only witness what is true,
Most wisely taking daily view
Of all I do and am.



THE DEAD.

'DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD.'

Persons : Hermes and Meniphus.—Scene : The shades.

Men. Where are the beautiful men, and the beautiful women, O Hermes? I see nothing but bones and skulls wanting flesh.

Her. Yet, verily, these are what all the poets praise.

Men. But show me Helen.

Her. The skull here is Helen.

Men. Then was it on this account that a thousand ships were filled from all Greece, and so many Greeks and barbarians fell, and so many cities were laid waste?

Her. But you do not see, O Menippus! the woman living; flowers when withered and colourless have not their glory, yet when they blossom they are most beautiful.'

LUCIAN.

(The above passages, selected from the dialogue, suggested the following lines.)

I.

IT lay before me dull and cold,
A lifeless image there;
It looked so young and yet so old,
Both semblances to share.

II.

Another day, and it had changed
 Into another self,
A new and other state was gained
 By time's corrupting pelf.

III.

The third day came, and with it brought
 An altered likeness quite,
Such wondrous change the hours had wrought
 Since it had seen the light.

IV.

Now after lapse of many years,
 I gazed on the same clay,
And through the mist of blinding tears
 Traced its life's sunny day.

V.

Was it with these dry withered bones
 I lived and loved and wept ?
And is it thus my grief condones
 Time's greatest, bitt'rest theft ?

VI.

Yes, for I look not on the dead,
 But on the life once bright ;
Whilst every saddened tear I shed
 Turns darkness into light.

VII.

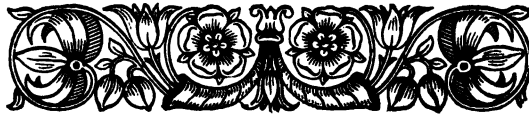
The flowers that now all withered lie,
Bereft of beauty's form,
Are glorious before they die,
And every place adorn.

VIII.

Since flowers will grow and blossom yet,
Though in another year ;
They teach the present to forget,
And bid me dry the tear.

IX.

My loved and lost will still be found,
In the eternal spring,
Where grace and glory both abound
And endless pleasure bring.



ANNIE'S VISIT.

I.

THE churchyard lay on hilly slope,
High on the sunny side ;
Below it spread the bright green fields,
And lake extending wide.

II.

It was a summer's afternoon,
And balmy was the air :
When seated on a little grave
Was mourning maiden fair.

III.

She sat and plucked some blades of grass,
Torn off the tiny grave.
Amongst her treasures sacredly
These lovingly to save.

IV.

On a like sunny afternoon
Some months before, in Spring,
Around that self-same grave she stood
In sorrow worshipping :

V.

Which then was opened to receive
A younger sister, whom
The MASTER called—a lovely plant—
In Paradise to bloom.

VI.

She now had come some spoil to take,
Some relic from the ground
In which her little sister had
A place of resting found.

VII.

With brightened blush and tear-gemmed eye,
She trembling mention made
Of one whose little body lay
In that small quiet grave.

VIII.

Whilst health and youth and beauty graced
The maiden who survived,
The other girl was food for worms,
The little girl who died.

IX.

Scanned by the eye of sense alone,
Who can their lots compare ?
Viewed by the eye of faith, to change
Their portions who would dare ?

X.

The dead child lives an angel's life—
An angel now in light ;
Removed from every earthly taint,
With spirit ever bright.

XI

The living child has yet to die,
To pass through sorrow's reign ;
To learn by this world's discipline
The sacrament of pain.

XII.

For her whom God hath taken first,
THANKSGIVING we outpour ;
For her who has to follow her,
We PRAY for evermore.



THE GREATER JOY.

. . . . πένθος
: . . . πικρῇ βαρὺ
Κρεσσόνων πρὸς ἀγαθῶν.

PINDAR, Olym., Ode ii., v. 41.

I.

HARD years of stern relentless toil,
With burning of the midnight oil,
The beauties of life's grace despoil ;
 Forgotten now
Success, that very pleasant foil,
 Has crowned thy brow.

II.

Old days of lowly ways and means,—
With fitting care, as well beseems
The man who it his duty deems
 To make such shifts :—
Change into visionary dreams
 By fortune's gifts.

III.

Clouds tinged with sorrow's sable hue,
That quite eclipsed a brighter view,
As nearer, darklier they drew,
Dissolved in light :
When joy makes all our feelings new,
They pass from sight.

IV.

Doubt holds me in its tangled maze,
Seeking on higher things to gaze ;
I meet with 'visions that amaze.
Lo ! all is cleared,
As if the cause of doubts once raised,
Had not appeared.

V.

Great grief before the greater joy,
Falls, dies away, leaves no alloy,
Passed are the feelings which annoy.
The stronger reigns ;
And sorrow now dethroned, to cloy
The soul disdains.



THE IMMORTAL.



Οὐ γάρ κὺς θάνατον γέ φυγεῖν εἰμαρμένον ἐστίν.

TYRTÆUS, Car., 2. v. v. 12, 13.

'Fate does not will that man from death should fly,
Although the child of deathless ancestry.'

COMMENT.

I.

O'er the inferior weaker part of man
Death surely holds his stern decree,
Nor all man's fears, or prayers, or struggles, can
From death his mortal body free.

II.

Yet does man claim a higher kindred ; one
Which through the power of the new birth,
By might of Him who death did overcome,
Unites man's soul whilst still on earth

III.

With that grand family that knows not death,
To whom an endless life pertains ;
A family of spirits who forget
The mortal, where the immortal reigns.

IV.

In low submission to the terror king,
For very scorn, may man now lie,
The power of death is such a transient thing,
Death dies in immortality.



THE SUMMER.

‘Οὐκ αἰεὶ θέρος ἐσσείραυ.’

HÆSIOD, ‘Works and Days,’ v. 502.

I.

‘It will not be summer ever ;
Words full of meaning deep ;
Would o’er past summers never,
We were not forc’d to weep.

II.

‘It will not be summer ever ;
The sun of joy so bright
Will depart, and departing sever
The ties that most delight.

III.

'It will not be summer ever,'
Chill winter's age creeps on ;
Winter of sorrow and terror,
Of hope dispelled and gone.

IV.

'It will not be summer ever,'
Here in this changeful time ;
But it will be summer ever
In the eternal clime.



THE IMMORTALITY OF GOOD- NESS.



‘ Here, Saion of Acanthus is sleeping a holy sleep,
Say not that the good die, or for the son of Dicon weep.’
CALLIMACHUS, Epigram x.

I.

‘ THE good can never die ;’
For goodness hath a living power
All feel and none deny,
Which quite transcends life’s fitful hour.

II.

‘ The good can never die ;’
An endless life awaits the just,
Though in the grave they lie
Their present tabernacle’s dust.

III.

'The good can never die ;'
All they have done, or thought, or said,
Throughout eternity
Bears lasting witness for the dead.

IV.

'The good can never die ;'
Engraven on the living heart,
To life this truth apply ;
In peace may then thy soul depart.



UNDAUNTED HOPES.



Ἡδὺ τι θαρσαλείας τὸν μακρὸν τείνειν βίον ἐλπίσι.

ÆSCHYLUS, 'Prom. Vinc.' 536-7.

'It is something sweet to extend a long life by undaunted hopes.'

L.

'UNDAUNTED hopes!'—and do they linger,
And lingering act upon a life,
Already marked by Time's sere finger,
And rifled of its keen delight?

II.

'Undaunted hopes!'—the clouds that lower,
And darkly o'er the future loom,
Are by their brightness reft of power
And glorified in their gloom.

III.

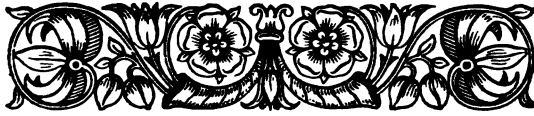
‘Undaunted hopes!’—they greatly lengthen
The season of man’s power to work ;
His energies they brace and strengthen,
Since oft in saddest vein they lurk.

IV.

‘Undaunted hopes!’—through many a sorrow
They lead the soul serene and pure,
Expectant of a glorious morrow,
Renewed, and able to endure.

V.

‘Undaunted hopes!’—O never leave me,
Sustain and lighten life’s decay ;
Much can I bear, with peace, beside thee,
Till changing night gives place to day !



THE SHORTENED LIFE.



(The following moral may perhaps point out a 'better hope' to those who have shared in the poet's regret.)

*‘Πολλὸς γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστὶ τεθκάναι χρόνος,
Ζῶμεν δ’ ἀριθμῷ παῦρα(καὶ) κακῶς ἔτεα.’*

SIMONIDES AMORGINUS, Frag. 3 Bergk.

‘FOR us there is but time too much,
To lie in death's enduring slumber,
To live—too short, and evil such—
Are the few years we have to number.’

MORAL.

I.

Yet not too few to do the will
Of Him who gave us being here,
If we the powers of life fulfil,
And serve him with a heart sincere.

II.

Our work will not be wrought in vain,
Be our life's measure long or brief ;
We an eternal rest shall gain—
A dateless end to all our grief.



A LAMENT.



I.

I WOULD I had begun to sing,
In early life, with clearer tones ;
When ev'ry day brought new delight,
And each small thing some pleasure owned.

II.

When youthful fancy wandered free,
Guided by Inspiration's hand ;
Leading through loveliness intense,
Midst fairy scenes, with golden strand.

III.

My muse, like bird, with wing unclipped,
Might then on high have gently soared ;
Learning from melodies unheard,
The music of a sweeter chord.

IV.

I might have earned in former years,
The right to take a lowly stand ;
Amongst our lyric singers, who
Already form a noble band.

V.

But now, my mellow ev'ning notes,
Like twilight echoes faintly fall ;
In gentle accents pleading low,
Before they die beyond recall.

VI.

Too late to make a name and fame ;
My spirit still I must outpour ;
Full mindful of that night which shall
Silence my song for evermore.

VII.

Just as the summer's setting sun,
In fading glory dies away ;
So would I that my verses might,
Reflect some tints of my past days.

VIII.

Recalling visions long gone by,
Of men, and deeds, and thoughts that moved,
My inmost being's very depths,
And their inherent glory proved.



THE SPRING.

I.

Why love I thee, the beautiful, the Spring ?
Is it because the winter's cold,
Transmuting into warmth, thou dost begin,
Ere thy sweet season groweth old ?

II.

Why love I thee, the beautiful, the Spring ?
Is it because a sky fair blue
Thou bearest on thy gentle tender wing,
Tinging creation with its hue ?

III.

Why love I thee, the beautiful, the Spring ?
Is it because of young green leaves,
And the nascent buds, and the birds which fling
Their tuneful songs amid the trees ?

IV.

Why love I thee, the beautiful, the Spring ?
Is it because the running brooks
Flow at thine advent with a purling ring,
Cheering the soul like loving looks ?

V.

Yes ! for these things, sweet Spring, I love thee well,
Yet, for others, I love thee more :
A deeper and tenderer love doth dwell
In my heart when now I explore

VI.

The mystic lessons which around thy shrine
Hover in loveliness arrayed,
When thou usherest in thy softer clime,
Rich in thy latent life displayed.

VII.

I love thee much, the beautiful, the Spring,
Because in type a pledge most true
To my fainting heart thou dost surely bring
Of a life which is ever new.

VIII.

A *beginning* is what I see in thee
Of better things to come in time ;
Whilst of *progress* thou art a prophecy—
Of progress that I claim as mine.

IX.

O Spring ! thou tendest to *perfection's* state,
Yet dost its glories never earn ;
For Autumn comes to gather in, when late,
These fruits, of which thou gav'st the germ.

X.

So, Spring, thou art a parable : and one
In which I thoughtfully can see
The fruits of life, ripened by heaven's sun,
Tracing their origin to thee.



RESULTS.

. . . ἀκέρδεια λέλογχεν
θαμινὰ κακαγόρως.

PINDAR, Olym, Ode 1. v. 84.

‘Reproach is often gained,
When loss has been sustained.’

COMMENT.

I.

It happens sometimes fortune frowns,
Whilst loss combined with failure crowns
Our best and wisest schemes ;
And plans matured by careful thought,
And labours which with toil are wrought,
Are turned to idle dreams.

II.

Then seek we sympathy in vain,
Or loving, cheerful words to gain—
 Reproach is all the store ;
Which the stern grant to ill-success,
Who in their selfish bitterness,
 Reproaches coldly pour.



PERSEVERANCE.



‘τὸ δὲ ζητούμενον ἀλωτὸν.’

SOPHOCLES, *Œd. Tyr.* v. cxi.

‘That which is searched for, is to be acquired.’

COMMENT.

I.

I SHALL gain the one thing that I search for,
If I search with an earnest mind ;
With a strong hope and firm purpose before,
And with due perseverance behind.

II.

Many years may it be ere I stand on
The vantage ground, high o’er the plain ;
Yet no failure shall make me abandon
The prize that I seek to obtain.

III.

That with seeking connected is finding,
Is a truth which is almost trite ;
It expresses a law which is binding,
As part of the great law of right.

IV.

With the rich wealth of life cast in plenty,
With power to gather and store ;
Shall *my* hand and *my* heart remain empty
Whilst others reap much, and some more ?

V.

Let me search, then, and find out all learning,
My mental possessions extend ;
Since all knowledge to blessing is turning
If sanctified to its true end.



THE LAST VICTORY.

‘ Questa volta la morte vince.’

Last words of Pius IX.

I.

‘ THIS time thou hast conquered, O Death ;’
I lowly bow to thy stern decree,
The failing pulse and falt’ring breath,
Tell of a soul that longs to be free.

II.

‘ This time thou hast conquered, O Death ;’
I am thine as a slave in thine hand,
Resistance is vain now, O Death,
Thee I feel it is vain to withstand.

III.

‘This time thou hast conquered, O Death ;’
Defeated before, I defied thee,
I smiled at thy accents which saith,
‘Come,—thou art bidden—and follow me.’

IV.

‘This time thou hast conquered, O Death ;’
Yet thy last hour of triumph has run,
Thy power is broken, O Death ;
Through the might of the Crucified One.



A KINDRED THOUGHT.

THEOGNIS—Greek Gnostic Poet, flourished 540 B.C.

‘Οὐκ ἔραμαι κλισμῷ βασιλῆϊν ἐγκατακείσθαι
Τεθνεως, ἀλλὰ, τὶ μοι ζῶντι γένοιτ’ ἀγαθόν
’Ασπάλαθοι τάπησιν ὁμοίον στρώμα θανόντι
Τὸ ξύλον ἢ σκληρόν γίγεται ἢ μαλακόν.’

Sententiæ, vv. 1191—1195.

To be placed upon a royal couch, I love not, when I’m
dead,
But to have my share of good things, whilst living, well
outspread ;
The bed of thorns or tapestry is all one to him who’s
gone,
The wood becometh hard or soft alike in the long home.

CHARLES LAMB—English Essayist, died A.D. 1834.

‘For what satisfaction hath a man, that he shall
“lie down with kings and emperors in death,” who in
his lifetime never greatly coveted the society of such
bedfellows ?’



THE PARTING.



I.

He scanned with love her eye to-day—
Blue eye which wandered far away—
And as he gazed it seemed to say,
‘Detain me not—I must away.’

II.

She turned to him her wasted cheek,
Yet shrinking from his sad grief deep ;
Suffring had made her frame so weak
She could not sigh—she could but weep,

III.

He watched her by the fading light ;
The remnant of a soul once bright
Flickered—last effort of its might ;
And he was left alone—with night.



THE EYE.



‘ . . . εἰ δὲ θεὸν

Ἀνὴρ τις ἔλπεται τι λασέμεν ἔρδων, ἀμαρτάνει.

‘ If any man, doing anything, expects to conceal it from God—
he errs.’

PINDAR. Olym. Od. i. v. 102.

I.

UNDER the robe of darkest night,
In chamber closely veiled from sight ;
Be careful what you do ;
The sable mantle owns its rents,
The chamber hath its occupants,
Which keep you in their view.

II.

A never sleeping watchful eye
That can the universe descry
Using eternal light ;
Is searching out thy works and ways,
Minutely with perpetual gaze,
By Wisdom's clearest light.



THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

I.

O DAY of life !—I love thee now,
In this thy waning light ;
I never loved thee half so well
In thy full noon-tide bright.

II.

Intensively I cling to thee,
As darkling shadows rise ;
And with a tearful, breaking heart,
I muse on what I prize ;

III.

On what I love and am to lose,
Of very self a part ;
The sight of each dear face which is
Engraven on my heart.

IV.

Association has endeared
Many and trivial things ;
To part from which, with agony
The thought my spirit wrings.

V.

The marvellous excitement too,
Of the impending change ;
With its eternal consequence,
Both thought and faith derange.

VI.

Severed from my old life—I feel,
A nameless terror flow ;
Which plunges all my feelings in,
Unutterable woe ;

VII.

Which loosens all my hold on time,
Past, present, and to come ;
Engendering a dark despair,
Of being quite undone.

VIII.

Ere the 'last enemy' shall gain,
Me, as his fallen prey ;
May God His Angel send to me,
To bear my soul away.



THE SWANS.

' . . . this pale faint swan,
Who chants a doleful hymn to his own death ;
And, from the organ-pipe of frailty, sings
His soul and body to their lasting rest.'
SHAKESPEARE, King John, Act v., sc. 7.

' Swanlike let me sing and die.'

BYRON.

In 'The Swans,' is embodied a portion of the reply of Socrates to the doubts of immortality which Simmias expressed (Plato, Phædo lxxxv. A.B.) to him lamenting that men, 'through their own fear of death, belie the swans,' which 'are prophetic.'

I.

'Twas said of old, that swans once sang all day,
Yet not with cold or hunger was their strife ;
Dying, they sang a more intensive lay,
First warbling accents of immortal life,

II.

Which they now celebrate in deathless notes,
Divining what so soon shall o'er them come ;
On the still air their solemn death-cry floats,
Sign the great change is nigh, the toil is done.

III.

Oh ! not in grief, with no sad thoughts of death,
They lay them down to sing their last adieu ;
Their tune is as a prophecy ; their breath,
A sweet voice whispering softly to the few

IV.

These are Apollo's servants, who
Upon his minstrel service ever wait ;
Chanting his pæan's glad, their lives all through,
Claiming their due reward ; unchanging state.

V.

Untainted with the shadow of a grief,
Since all is joy and gladness on that shore ;
From the dull round of life a full relief,
Rest, with harmonious song for evermore.

VI.

We men with darkened minds their rapture scan,
And wrongly read the indications given
Of this prophetic joy ;—reading as man
Does read—the tokens of the gift from heaven.

VII.

It is not thus with souls of harmony,
Attuned to music of enduring spheres ;
In death, to them, there is no agony,
A longing, living hope casts out all fears.

VIII.

Such look beyond the veil of time and sense,
Beyond the present scene of pain or woe ;
To Paradise the blest, from whence,
All joyous melodies for ever flow.

IX.

These souls divine, prophetic like the swan,
In unheard melodies about to die :
Utter the first notes of that grand " New Song,"
Which represents immortal ecstasy.



AUTUMN.



' Pomifer Autumnus fruges effuderit.'—Horace.

I.

THOU comest with a footstep soft,
Clad in thy robe of misty morn,
Wearing a loveliness that oft
With thee is born.

II.

One quite unlike the changeful Spring,
With all its blushing, budding grace ;
A softer beauty thou dost fling
O'er nature's face.

III.

The waving corn thou passest by,
Whose ripe ears take a golden hue,
Which bids the swain his sickle ply,
With labour due.

AUTUMN.

IV.

Thou peerest laughingly on sward,
By apple-trees o'ershadowed quite ;
Their tinted fruit is thy award,
And thy delight.

V.

Thy sun imparts the down and bloom
To plum, and peach, and apricot ;
To ripen products of earth's womb,
Thy blessed lot.

VI.

Thy footsteps many tokens leave,
That nature's work is well nigh done ;
And that of this year's gifts we have
Now reaped the sum.

VII.

E'en as before the storm, the lull,
Or as the joy before the grief ;
So art thou very plentiful
For season brief.

VIII.

Borne on the wings of thy still air,
Is coming Winter, dead and cold,
With blasts which make creation bare
Ere thou art old.

IX.

Just as at close of life the calm,
With ties that daily grow more dear,
Predict, by this, their very charm,
The end is near.

X.

Thou art as evening rainbow bright,
Which, shining in the setting sun,
Dissolves in the retiring light ;
Darkness has come.

XI.

O Autumn ! thy remaining hours
We treasure with a miser care,
Walking amidst thy fruits and flowers
With saddened air.

XII.

With hearts prophetic, since we mark
Thy gentle reign is well nigh o'er ;
Whilst death and winter—both so dark—
Lurk at our door.



THE PHANTOM MAN.

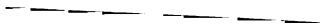


FIRST THOUGHTS.

In connection with the centenary of Pompeii, held Sep. 25, 1879, an account is given of a Pompeian house, opened some years since, which furnished the fact recorded in the following lines.

I.

AND THOU art standing there
Before us ! spoken of with bated breath ;
Standing in thy calm majesty of death—
To gaze we hardly dare.
Emotion strong, and thought that travels fast
Quail with dread awe before THY mighty past.



II.

THOU child of time remote,
Strange link between the epoch of to-day,
And that old world of THINE so far away ;
An age we seek to note
Counting the centuries by tens, since when
THOU dwelt amongst the throng of living men.

III.

Would we could speak with THEE,
And that thy voiceless lips might break once more
Their awful silence, and those thoughts outpour,
The continuity
Of which, after such centuries of rest,
Would flow with august meaning from thy breast.

IV.

What hast THOU waited for,
Standing expectant, through this weary time ?
Sustained by what delusive hope sublime
At this thy very door
Hast thou kept sentinel to catch the tread
Of some who might bring succour to the dead ?

v.

And we have come at last !
After thy long and weary waiting—come
To see THEE here, and thus to note the sum
Of centuries all past ;
Whilst our slow feet have tarried on their way,
And generations have been turned to clay.

vL

All mute and motionless,
Throughout these many ages, aye the same ;
Hardly of earth, we find THEE here remain,
In form so passionless ;
THOU mockest the swift flight of passing change
Abiding still, beyond its restless range.

vII.

To marvel is not well ;—
These eighteen hundred years, and more, below
Beside eternity as swiftly flow
As moments where we dwell.
Why wonder that the form remained thus whole,
Forgetful that eternal is the soul ?

VIII.

But look ! a flash,—away
Has melted this weird phantom form—no trace
Remains of him, who in his proper place
Hath stood with us to-day ;
Whilst dust impalpable—a crumbling heap
Is sinking slowly all around our feet.

IX.

What more is mortal life ?
Mere semblance and the shadow of life real,
Of that true being which within we feel
Waging a ceaseless strife,
With all Corruption's elements—the clan
Of which conspired to form the PHANTOM MAN.



THE PHANTOM MAN.

SECOND THOUGHTS.

I.

My story is about a man
Who was so very old ;
So old—but if I tell his age,
My story would be told.

II.

We found HIM standing in a room,
Alone and in the dark ,
At the first glance I must confess,
He gave us all a start.

III

We spoke to HIM—HE did not speak,
HE would not even nod ;
In vain a gushing lady gave,
A sympathetic sob.

IV.

We tried our friend's eyes with a light,
They would not even wink ;
HE was a funny personage
We all began to think.

V.

The room HE stood in, too, was queer,
Adorned with frescoes strange ;
O'er some of which I should not like,
My daughter's eye to range.

VI.

Their colour was as perfect as,
When first put on the walls :
But oh !—they were unlike the views,
That decorate our halls.

VII.

Devices many, quaint and rare,
With divers landscapes crude ;
And gods and dancing goddesses,
Who certainly seemed rude.

VIII.

But strangest fact of all, it was,
Before we could get near ;
Men had from ashes and *débris*,
His doorway first to clear.

IX.

Inferior servants mostly will
The room-door open leave :
But this man's lackeys had been bred
Of quite another breed.

X.

His door they shut most carefully,
Before they went away ;
And left HIM in HIS solitude,
For ever and a day.

XI.

And then you know, the ashes fell,
Which quite closed up the door ;
Alas ! Pompeian houses had,
No first or second floor.

XII.

Endurance will in trials oft
Nobly support the shock ;
Therefore HE waited by HIS door
For some kind soul to knock.

XIII.

HE waited all that day and night,
HE waited a full week ;
For HIS lost presence no one came,
In anxious fear to seek. .

XIV.

HE stood throughout the month and year,
The century throughout :
Through nearly twice a thousand years,
But nothing came about.

XV.

HE stood until HIS limbs were stiff,
Until HIS eyes were gone ;
Until to dust had turned HIS flesh,
Also HIS very bone.

XVI.

Creatures of habit are we all ;
Some thousand years or so,
Confirm our idiosyncracies,
Whichever way they go.

XVII.

Our host had grown too old to change
Of life HIS habit now ;
Living so long in solitude,
He could not bear a row.

XVIII.

The air and light came strange to HIM,
As used to other ways ;
So HE bethought it was high time,
To terminate HIS days.

XIX.

E'en as we gazed—a sudden flash,
A sudden quiver ran
Throughout HIS frame—and into dust
Dissolved the PHANTOM MAN.



FALLING LEAVES.



"Ἄνδρες . . . φύλλων γενεᾷ προσόμοιοί.

'Men like to the race of leaves.'

ARISTOPHANES. *Aves*, l. 685.

I.

THESE falling leaves,
Which from the trees
Are floating idly by;
Nature's preachers !
Saddest teachers !
Whispering 'man must die.'

II.

Each season round,
Their own sad sound,
Repeated year by year ;
As they are blown.
And gently moan,
Grating upon the ear ;

III.

Holds a meaning,
For this seeming
Life, lasting but to-day ;
Shadows fleeting,
Nothing keeping,
Barely a short told 'say'

IV.

Leaves have spoken,
By mute token,
To myriads passed away ;
They are speaking,
Full of meaning—
'Prepare for *thy* decay.'

v.

They tell of Spring,
Fled on Time's wing,
Season of love and grace ;
A glorious time,
In every line
Revealing beauty's trace.

vi.

Once they were young,
Then from them sprung,
A shade for Love's delight ;
Spring-time and prime !
Yes ! they were thine,
So beautiful, so bright !

vii.

Their work now done,
Autumn has come,
Will follow rain and cold ;
They forgotten,
Lying rotten,
Symbolize what is old.

VIII.

We pause—a tree,
Is promised thee ;
Higher lessons teaching ;
Whose leaves never,
Fall or wither,
Life eternal preaching.

THE END.

JANUARY, 1880.

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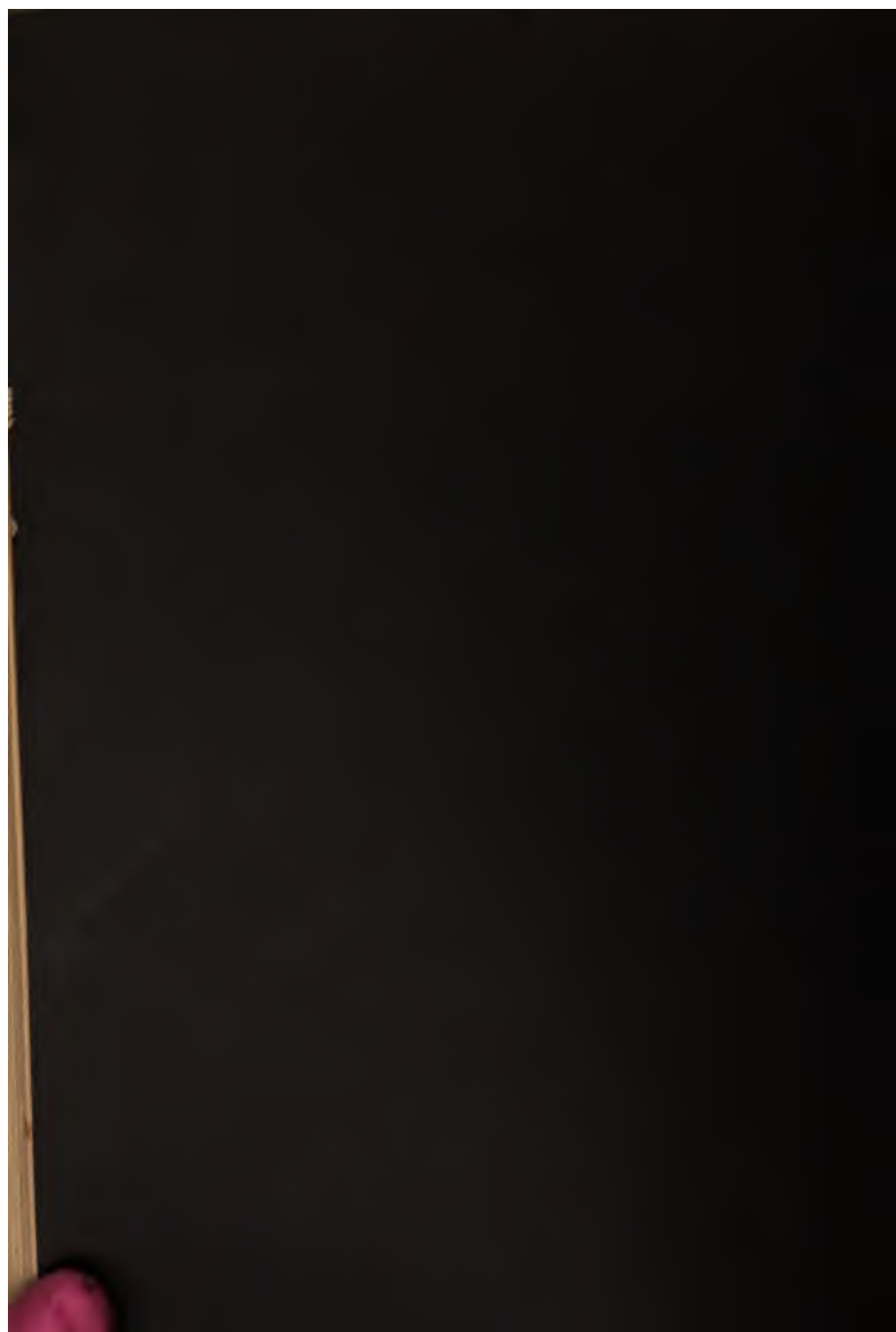
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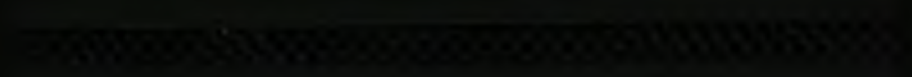
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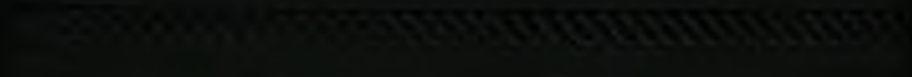




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